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## THE CIVIC FEDERATION OF CHICAGO.

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### A STUDY IN SOCIAL DYNAMICS.

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If descriptions by old residents may be trusted, the most prominent element in the population of Chicago, previous to the period of the World's Fair, had been a constellation of groups, made up of intense individualists. The members of each group had calculated and coöperated with a chief view to each man's main chance, yet under restrictions which instinct and experience of business necessity had declared to be expedient. Floating in and out among these charmed circles of coöperators was a great multitude, whom no man could number, of unattached outsiders, all bent on the same purpose of personal profit. To both classes corporate municipal action was an affair of so small proportionate moment that it fell into comparative indifference and neglect. The only efficient municipal consciousness was among the people who saw in administrative machinery a means of getting gain which they could not win in competition with merchants and manufacturers and operators in real estate. How far the concentration of effort to get the World's Fair for Chicago resulted in changes which require modification of this description, it would be impossible to say and futile to inquire. Undoubtedly there was enlargement of view and increase of sympathy from that coöperation, which prepared the way for a kind of patriotic action that had been unknown before.

Since the autumn of 1893 a civic revival has occurred in Chicago, the evidences of which are familiar to all her citizens. These acts of civic patriotism are by no means, as will appear later, the work of a single organization. The Civic Federation

which this paper will describe is not the center and circumference of the new civic spirit in Chicago ; it is rather the rallying point around which the civic patriotism of Chicago citizens has gathered. But, as will be explained, the work accomplished, partly through the agency of the Civic Federation, has been performed by a great many individuals and associations in combination, each representing a different element of public interest.

#### I. THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CIVIC FEDERATION.

In order to mark the contrast between the outlook in Chicago previous to 1893 and the present condition, the form of the Civic Federation must be described in brief. The organization consists, then, according to the by-laws as recently amended, of a central council, composed of 134 members, and an affiliated council of 100 members in each ward. Of the 34 wards in the city, 32 are already organized as branches of the central council. Of the 134 members of the central council, 100 were selected by the incorporators ; the remaining 34 are presidents of the ward councils. The central council is divided into six departments, the jurisdiction of which was not originally, and has not yet been precisely defined ; but the scope of the different departments has been arranged without difficulty, so that there is a practical understanding about division of labor. The six departments are (1) political, (2) municipal, (3) philanthropic, (4) industrial, (5) educational, (6) moral. The ward councils are organized with committees corresponding to the departments of the central council. The members of the ward councils are kept in touch with the plans and efforts of the central council by means of meetings called by the departmental committees of the several departments, in which meetings all members of the corresponding ward committees participate. The constitution of the Federation provides for the organization of precinct councils, which shall have the same relation to the ward councils which the latter hold to the central council. Thus far the organization of precinct councils has been attempted in only one

or two instances; and the Federation proper consists, therefore, of the membership of the central and of the ward councils. The central council has an executive committee consisting of the five executive officers: president, first and second vice-president, secretary, treasurer, and ten other members. This executive committee, which is also a board of trustees, has authority to appoint "such other officers and agents to hold during the pleasure of the board as it shall deem advisable;" and it has general control of all matters of the Federation not otherwise provided for in the by-laws.

## II. THE WORK OF ONE YEAR.

As already remarked, and as will be further explained, the Civic Federation cannot and does not claim exclusive credit for the patriotic work which the citizens of Chicago have accomplished during the last eighteen months. It is impossible however to tell the story of these achievements without connecting them with the organization of the Federation. They are therefore referred to at this point as though they were the work of the Federation, but more precise statements will follow.

The most important facts in the history of the recent civic revival in Chicago were referred to in the annual reports of the various departments of the Civic Federation. A summary of these reports, retaining as far as possible their own language, will be the most graphic account of the Federation's work.

The municipal committee reported as follows:

The first important business undertaking was "the work of reclaiming for the use of the public what is called 'The Lake Front Park,' and improving and beautifying the same." A sub-committee was appointed to ascertain the legal rights of the citizens in the premises, and to memorialize the city government with a view to immediate resumption of these rights, and the improvement of the lake front for park purposes. The committee performed its work, but the memorial was not acted upon by the city government. It is not impossible, however, that the work of the Federation through this committee had an influence

in preventing the use of the lake front for a permanent post office and other buildings, and that it also assisted in preparing the minds of the citizens for support of the present movement, led by the officers of the Art Institute, to make the grounds surrounding that institution an ornament and a credit to the city, and to extend the lake front park by reclaiming land now submerged.

Next in order of time was the creation, in June 1894, of a joint committee, consisting of the municipal committee and representatives of the following reform and political clubs: The Union League, the Iroquois, the Marquette, the Hamilton, the Waubensee, the Commercial, the Illinois, the Lincoln, the Jefferson, the Citizens' League, the Trade and Labor Assembly, and the Real Estate Board. The committee of the Federation and the members thus appointed, making a total of forty, appointed a special committee to divide the work and nominate sub-committees for the various parts. The following divisions, with a special committee in charge of each, were adopted:

- (1) Revenue laws, town and county relations and special assessments;
- (2) City charter, administration, etc.
- (3) Ballot law, primary election, and corrupt practices act.
- (4) The merit system in civil service.
- (5) Sanitation, charities, and educational matters.

These committees not only studied their subjects personally, but secured all the aid possible from experts, and prepared bills for the legislature embodying the results of their investigations. Of these the Civil Service Bill was vigorously pressed until it became a state law, and it was adopted in Chicago by a popular majority of 45,000. This bill provides for the appointment by the mayor of three civil service commissioners, one for the term of three years, one for two years, and one for one year; and for the appointment, after three years, of a commissioner to take the place of that one whose term of service has expired. Not more than two commissioners may be members of the same political party. It is the duty of the

commissioners to classify all the offices and employments in the city with reference to the examinations provided for in the bill, excepting officers elected by the people, or those whose appointment is subject to confirmation by the city council; excepting, also, judges and clerks of election, members of the board of education, the superintendent and the teachers of schools, the heads of the principal city departments, the members of the law department, and one private secretary of the mayor. Competitive examinations, practical in character, and fairly testing the relative capacity of applicants for the discharge of the duties of the position sought, are made compulsory, with the provision that no question shall relate to religious or political opinions. Promotion must also be made upon competitive examinations.

The character of the other legislation proposed by the municipal committee is indicated by the following titles: (1) a primary election law, (2) a corrupt practices act, (3) a revenue law, (4) a city charter, (5) a bill regulating special assessments.

Reference will be made later under another head to investigations carried on by sub-sections of the municipal committee; and we may here refer in addition only to the following forms of action which the committee conducted. In the case of the three so-called "boodle ordinances," known as the Ogden Gas Ordinance, the Cosmopolitan Electric Ordinance, and the Light, Heat and Power Ordinance, the committee retained one of the ablest attorneys in the city, and as the result of its presentation of the case, the ordinances were declared not only voidable, but void, because of irregularities in their passage. A committee was appointed to wait upon Mayor Swift and ask him to revoke the license issued by the preceding administration to each of the companies claiming a franchise under these ordinances. The order revoking the licenses was at once issued. In addition to this the committee procured the suspension by the recently elected city council of a large number of contracts for sewer building and other improvements, which had been awarded without due process

of law during the last days of the preceding municipal administration.

The most important action of the political committee was in connection with election frauds. It offered \$200 reward for evidence leading to the conviction of fraudulent voters at the election of November 1894. At the same time other rewards were offered by other organizations. A committee of six Democrats and six Republicans was appointed by the president of the Federation to take charge of the work. The committee raised \$50,000 by popular subscription, employed able attorneys, and with a strong corps of detectives secured evidence on which the grand jury indicted sixty-seven men. One of the most important cases has been tried, and the principal conspirator, after a most stubborn defence, sent to the penitentiary for eighteen months. Other important cases resulted in a plea of guilty and the imposition of a fine. At this writing a number of cases have not been heard.

Under the auspices of the political committee a conference was called early in December 1894, composed of representatives from one hundred of the leading clubs and organizations in the city, political, social, industrial, moral, etc., to consider the importance of the then approaching city election. It was agreed that public meetings should be held throughout the city to arouse voters to the necessity of attending their respective primaries, and that every effort should be put forth to promote the candidacy of good men. The political committees of the various ward councils took up the matter with the central council, and systematic work was done in nearly every ward to secure, first, the appointment of competent and honest judges and clerks; second the choice of accessible and otherwise suitable primary polling places; third the attendance of the voters at their respective primaries. As a result of these efforts many high grade men were nominated by the regular parties, but where gang methods did prevail, and no fit candidates were nominated by their party, the ward committees were instructed to call the people together and secure the nomination of good men by

agitation. A circular was sent to the ward committees instructing them to have, where necessary, watchers and challengers at the polls to see "that no infraction of the election law be permitted, and that the votes on the civil service law be properly counted and returned."

A special committee was appointed to devise measures for the instruction of voters upon the merits of the Civil Service Bill. This committee not only circulated leaflets and posters containing the substance of the bill, but they organized a small army of speakers, who attended specially arranged meetings in all quarters of the city. Large numbers of these meetings were arranged at the lunch hour of the operatives in factories, and the provisions of the proposed law were carefully explained and discussed, and the questions of the men were answered. The result of this work appeared in the size of the popular majority in favor of the bill.

The industrial committee reported:

During the strike last summer, a board of conciliation was organized, composed of fifteen members representing labor organizations, employers and the professional lines. This board sought to bring about the peaceful solution of the trouble, consulting almost daily with all sides of the controversy; but while little was accomplished on that line, the board learned the necessity for legal action and at once set about, after the strike was over, to secure a sentiment in favor of an arbitration law, to which end a conference on arbitration and conciliation was called that was participated in by the ablest and best known writers and thinkers on this subject in the country. The proceedings of this conference were published at the expense of the Federation in a pamphlet of ninety-six pages.

The industrial committee prepared a bill similar to the Massachusetts law, which at the time of writing appears likely to be enacted. The conference above referred to also provided for the appointment by the president of the Civic Federation of a national committee of twenty-five or more who should be invited to carry on the work of agitation for arbitration and conciliation in all labor disputes. The sub-committees of the industrial



division are conducting investigations of the sweat-shop evil, the child-labor problem, and complaints of the waiters' union; they are also trying to break up a system which permits saloon-keepers to dictate the employment of waiters in restaurants.

The most important work of the philanthropic division was the organization of the Central Relief Association, or charity clearing house, the purpose of which was to systematize the charities of Chicago and prevent duplication of work. The charities of Chicago are so numerous, and they have disbursed yearly such large sums of money, that an attempt to supplement their operations has, to large numbers of citizens, seemed altogether superfluous. But, as will be explained presently, the emergency which existed in the fall of 1893 was one with which existing agencies were unprepared to deal. It was necessary to extemporize agencies for meeting the extraordinary and appalling demand for special relief. The energies of the people who afterwards composed the Federation were accordingly devoted almost exclusively to the organization which has since become the Chicago Bureau of Charities. Some of the most important parts of the work of this bureau were performed by prominent officers of the Chicago Relief and Aid Society, the St. Vincent de Paul Society, and the United Hebrew Charities. Such coöperation furnished sufficient evidence that the new agency was not an aspirant for the place of the older charitable organizations, but that it was a necessary complement of their work. During the winter of 1893-4, the association thus formed collected and applied, partly through the existing charitable organizations, the sum of \$135,000. This, however, but partially indicates the importance of the work accomplished. The registration of persons receiving charity was at once begun, and 36,000 names are now catalogued.

The bureau is completing its organization, and by the coming winter will be so organized that no part of the city will be neglected.

The report of the committee on morals contains the following:

Last August public gambling was notorious throughout the city. Agents and cappers for houses brazenly and openly solicited victims

in the streets. The mayor and chief of police when appealed to declared there was no public gambling in Chicago. The Federation organized a series of raids which not only demonstrated the existence of the gambling, but that where the police were vigilant and properly instructed they could easily suppress it and keep it suppressed.

The public houses were all closed, but the committee had to follow the gamblers around the city, causing the arrest of over 300, and the destruction of much furniture and many implements. To show public sentiment in the question the Federation called a mass meeting at Central Music Hall, and so great was the public interest that overflow meetings had to be held in other halls. The committee also swore out warrants for and secured the conviction of a large number of lottery and pool sellers.

Upon the coming in of the new administration the committee promptly interviewed the mayor and chief of police on the policy to be pursued in reference to gambling and all other vices, securing satisfactory assurances that as soon as the police force could be properly organized, the people of Chicago would have no cause for complaint against the department. Agents for the committee secured for, and turned over to the police a complete diagram of the vice of Chicago, all of which is securing the proper attention. The committee is assured that the concert hall and stall attachments to saloons must go, that the opium dens will be wiped out and that other forms of bestiality, not fit for mention here, will be stamped out completely, or, to use the words of Chief Badenoch, "There will be some heads fall in the basket. I did not know until the report of your committee that such things could exist in a civilized community, and they will not exist long in Chicago after today."

An investigation by the committee led to the seizure of a lot of obscene literature and pictures and the subsequent arrest and conviction of a number of offenders.

From the report of the educational section the following is important:

The general committee, through the ward educational committees, has secured an investigation of the sanitary condition of every school building in the city, the seating capacity of same, the lighting and heating of the building, and the general capacity of teachers and methods employed. Many of the recommendations by

the committee were promptly adopted by the school board. Arrangements are being perfected whereby some of the members of the committee will attend all meetings of the school board, and the committee meetings of the same.

The committee is also endeavoring to secure through the board of education the use of large halls in many of the school buildings, for monthly meetings of patrons and teachers, to be called parents' councils, the object being to arouse a greater interest in the public schools.

### III. THE ORIGIN OF THE CIVIC FEDERATION.

This account of the form of organization of the Civic Federation and this synopsis of the work in which the Civic Federation has had a part, furnishes the occasion for pointing out facts beneath the surface, which make the experience of Chicago instructive. In order to bring out these facts it is necessary to tell more of the way in which the Civic Federation came to exist. It cannot be stated too emphatically that the Chicago civic revival, and particularly the organization of the Federation, marked a stage in orderly civic evolution. This step in evolution was accomplished both through the power of latent energy and as a result of certain external impulses. It was not however in a large degree or in an important sense, the work of external agencies or of mechanical contrivances. The visible impulse which led to effective organized expression of civic consciousness in Chicago was a mass meeting called at Central Music Hall, Sunday, November 12, 1893, by Mr. William T. Stead, of London. It was a mere accident, however, and not at all significant, that this spark which ignited the material already collected was struck by a stranger and a foreigner. The more important fact is that long before this incident, prominent Chicago citizens had given much attention to plans for municipal organization to do work that the city government was notoriously unlikely to perform. But previous to this agitation of the subject by a few prominent citizens, there had been for years much argument and appeal in Chicago for more intelligent municipal action. There had been concentrated effort on a small scale and confined to

narrow circles. For example, the Civil Service Reform League is more than a decade old. The Citizens' League is younger, but it has performed its part in preparing the minds of the people for the work recently undertaken. The Municipal Order League, organized with special reference to work needed in the city to give fitting welcome to World's Fair guests, has just expired. Many Chicago citizens have been in communication with the currents of thought on municipal subjects which have affected all our great cities. Thus a preparatory process had been going forward which fitted many individuals to become organs of a more sensitive municipal consciousness. The immediate impulse which aroused this consciousness was an accident; and by this it is meant that influences were at work which would have brought about the same result if the particular incident had not occurred that introduced the period of civic revival. The actual order of events was as follows: At the Stead meeting on November 12, 1893, a committee of five was chosen to select a committee of twenty-one to organize a "Civic Confederation of Chicago." The committee of five was selected to represent the following classes:—"labor," "education," "commerce," "religion," "women." The social philosopher will not feel constrained to repress the smile which this classification provokes, but whatever its logical faults, it served its purpose. Following the appointment of the committee, this resolution was adopted:

*Resolved*, That it is the sense of this meeting that the formation of a Civic Federation is feasible and practicable, and that a committee of twenty-one be selected as an organizing committee, and that this committee be selected by the committee of five already selected.

The committee of five accepted the responsibility assigned, selecting, however, a committee numbering over forty, and notified them of their appointment in a letter which contained the following paragraph:

The object of this organization, briefly and in general terms, is the concentration in one potential non-political, non-sectarian center, of all the forces that are now laboring to advance our municipal, philanthropical, industrial, and moral interests, and to accomplish all

that is possible towards energizing and giving effect to the public conscience of Chicago. It is not expected to accomplish all this in one day, but all great movements must have a beginning, and consultation with leading citizens of all classes who desire to see Chicago the best governed, the healthiest, and the cleanest city in this country, leads us to believe that now is the time to begin; and especially do we believe it pertinent that such a movement should begin while our people are yet filled with the new ideas, new ambitions and inspirations drawn from the great Exposition and its valuable adjunct, the World's Congress.

If the committee thus summoned had been called together in an ordinary time, it would speedily have turned into a Pickwick club, after the precedent of many similar gatherings. In this instance, however, the demand for an organ of civic consciousness was not manufactured artificially. It was not created by Mr. Stead, nor by his meeting. It had been gathering force unnoticed while Mr. Stead and others were theorizing. For some time previous to the call of the committee accounts had been appearing in the daily papers of the unusual number of lodgers at the station houses; and finally it became known that even the corridors and stairways of our city hall had become headquarters at night for upwards of 1500 vagrants. This fact proved to be the circumstance which gave to the citizens' committee a vocation, and resulted in permanent organization. When the committee met, a few days later, it proved to be a company which was heterogenous, as a committee would necessarily be if it fairly represented all the interests of so large a town. Yet the diversities of the company were less prominent than the generous and patriotic motives which they evidently held in common, without a clearly defined body of common knowledge about civic conditions, and consequently without definite common purposes. At another time such an aggregation would probably have dissolved in a few weeks, from absence of a principle of coherence. But a piece of work was at hand, importunate, imperative, the responsibility for which could not be fixed upon any one in particular, which however appealed to the conscience of all humane citizens alike. The sociologists' theory of the organic structure

of society had probably never been heard of by the majority of the committee, and they would have had little patience with such abstractions, if they had been mentioned; but the consciences of the members acted in accordance with the principles contained in that philosophical conception of society, and there was aroused a sense of responsibility for outcasts belonging to the community and inadequately provided for by the community. A voluntary social organ was forthwith extemporized,—an organ of intelligence, volition and action; an organ in which the conscience of the community with reference to its helpless poor became conscious and effective. The necessity of performing, by extra-legal processes, the city's work of protecting and caring for a crowd of unprotected men and women against death from exposure and starvation was the task which mobilized the new civic consciousness.

Reference was just made to the generous sentiments of the men and women composing the committee. It is an ungracious task to qualify that allusion, but it would be an omission that would in a measure defeat the purpose of this study if we should neglect the complementary element of sagacity and prudence which speedily found its place in the conscious reckoning of nearly all who united in the relief work. The keynote of modern philosophy is intelligence, or as we speak of it more objectively, publicity. It is claimed very generally among theorists that publicity is the radical treatment of unwholesome social conditions. The claim rests upon the expressed or implied belief which was behind the Socratic thesis, "Sin is ignorance." In other words, given wider and deeper insight into the facts involved in our conduct, and our opinions and then our acts will be modified. There will result in part a reorganization of the egoistic and the altruistic elements of conduct. Not that egoism will be eliminated, but that it will be correlated. The dynamic of social reorganization is the economy of enlightened selfishness. It is only our stupidity which imagines that altruism and egoism are antithetical. They are complementary. They are, as it were, the stroke and the recover; equally essential parts of

the one process of progress. The only intelligent selfishness is structurally identified with unselfishness, as warp and woof in a piece of silk. Egoism that is not equally altruism tends to collapse of its own weight.

The pertinence of these reflections appears in view of the fact that the crisis calling for special relief brought into the consciousness of many representative citizens some most potent clauses of the organic translation of society. They apparently saw for the first time, or more clearly than ever before, that social peace depends upon maintaining something more like a balance between property and poverty. They realized that there is a prudential reason, which sociologists would call "a principle of the structural economy of society," for placing some of the strength of the strong at the disposal of the weak. One successful business man expressed it in the form: "Society must pick up its own chips or the chips will clog the wheels." In other words, perception of the facts of the situation passed very shortly into interpretation of the meaning of the facts, as elements of a social condition in which citizens as such have a personal concern.

Up to this point, then, we have traced the manifestation of an aroused civic consciousness simply as it concentrated itself upon the work of temporary relief. The conduct of this relief work served in the first place to bring sympathetic and generous feeling down from the cloudy region of speculation and to put it into application in certain specialized efforts. It further served to inform these newly aroused consciences as to the relation by which one part of civic amelioration is inextricably bound up with the remainder of corporate interests. While the town was canvassed for workers and for pecuniary supporters of relief measures, and while the time of all actively engaged was consumed by their attention to this fragment of the city's needs, new demonstration was met at every turn that a single municipal condition cannot be treated apart from the total associated life of the city. Thus contact with a single, and that an accidental phase of actual municipal conditions, developed intelligence about the other conditions involved in advantageous municipal coöperation.

Then followed in natural order corresponding organization for the correlation of municipal activity as a whole.

#### IV. SOME PECULIAR ELEMENTS OF STRENGTH.

On February 3, 1894, the Secretary of State of Illinois issued the certificate of incorporation of the Civic Federation of Chicago. The remainder of this paper will attempt to point out certain features which distinguish the work of this organization from that of somewhat similar associations in other cities.

*The first fact which deserves remark in discussion of this organization is that it was distinctly not the creature of speculative theory.* It was the arrangement in working form of elements that had already existed in Chicago. It was a body of men and women representing in the most complete way the different essential interests of residents within the city limits. It was not an attempt to exploit a doctrine, but rather to insure the permanence and development of an already existing reality. This fact was forcibly expressed by Mr. Gage when he said in his address upon resigning the office of president :

Your association was not an invention, the result of an ingenious mind studying to provide some new form of public activity for restless persons hungry for notoriety. It was a crystallization of sentiment slowly formed through long periods against civil and social abuses no longer bearable.

This proposition is sustained by ample documentary evidence, an item of which is therefore in place. At the first meeting of the committee appointed to recommend a plan of organization, the following statements were submitted as the basis of precedence :

1. The amount of social intelligence in our population is greatly in excess of the amount organized and available for effective work.
2. The demands of civic safety, convenience, and comfort, are in many respects seriously neglected in Chicago, business standards of private individuals and corporations being the basis of judgment.
3. The deficiencies of organized and effective action are partly the



fault of officers hired and sworn to perform particular duties, partly the result of inattention and neglect on the part of people who might easily combine and supply civic needs for which the laws do not provide.

4. At the present moment there is widespread interest among Chicago people in the feasibility of placing a larger share of control over municipal concerns in the hands of those citizens who are most responsible and most patriotic. The opinion which is gaining force about the relation of the average citizen to our corporate affairs is substantially that contained in a tract by Mr. Charles Richardson, published by the Municipal League of Philadelphia. The title is "The City of Philadelphia; its Stockholders and Directors." Although the tract refers to only one fraction of the municipal problem, the principle to which it calls attention makes it an expression about the facts of the whole situation in each large city. Changing only the specific references to Philadelphia, the following paragraph represents the opinion which our committee is trying to make effective: "You are a shareholder in the coöperative corporation, the business company known as The City. So far as other companies are concerned, you may be your own master, and if you are afraid that they will not pay good dividends, or will assess you too heavily, or if you doubt the honesty or ability of their managers, or in case you have no money to invest, you can decline to become a stockholder. But with the city you have no such option, and it is only by emigration or suicide that you can avoid paying a portion of its expenses and becoming responsible for liabilities which it incurs. Even if you have no property to be taxed, you must nevertheless contribute indirectly. Prices would be lower, and you could live for less if the taxes were reduced on the house you rent, the store where your food and clothing were bought, and the capital and business of those with whom you deal. Some may think that people who have nothing and earn nothing, cannot suffer from the burden of taxation; but this is a mistake, since those who support them could afford to supply their wants more liberally if there were no taxes to be paid. There is not a man or woman or child in the whole city who has not a personal interest in preventing unnecessary taxation. There is not a single individual who is too rich or too poor to be benefited by any effort which will tend to secure the utmost wisdom and economy in the collection and expenditure of every penny that goes into the city treasury."

5. The essentials to be provided for in any city, in order to secure maximum results for the stockholder, are :

- (1) Abundance of pure air and pure water and of street lights, involving the whole business of sanitation and public hygiene.
- (2) Cheap, rapid, and safe transportation of goods and of persons.
- (3) Security against contamination and adulteration of food and drink, particularly of milk.
- (4) Easy and swift transmission of ideas.
- (5) Efficient police service.
- (6) Efficient fire protection.
- (7) Sufficient and rationally administered charities, including all kinds of philanthropic relief of mind, body and estate.
- (8) Equitable assessment and honest expenditure of taxes.
- (9) Adequate guardianship of the interests of stockholders by their representatives in the city government, with ready legal means of fixing responsibility.
- (10) Adequate provision for schools, recreations and culture, including moral progress.
- (11) Provision for acquaintance, with common understanding and coöperation, between the different elements of the citizenship.

6. The fact that the laws place some of these interests under official charge and leave others to take their chances of voluntary attention, does not necessarily answer the question, "What must be done to get these interests better protected." Experience has shown that in private or public corporations, irresponsible constituencies make irresponsible officials. The stockholding citizens must influence the selection, audit the accounts, and control the conduct of every paid servant, as well as organize means of performing public services which government has not been commanded to perform.

7. The impulse in Chicago which has called our committee into existence is of the same nature with municipal attempts in other cities. If we understand the motives which are at work among Chicago citizens, however, civic federation here must have wider scope and draw to itself more different kinds of interests than either of the organizations which might be named in other cities. The present demand of public-spirited citizens in Chicago appears to be for a

representative central body which shall be a permanent, unofficial congress of good citizenship;—a congress made up of persons who are capable of deciding disinterestedly what associated action would be for the best interests of the whole city; persons, also, whose endorsement would not only stamp their recommendations as worthy of respect and confidence, but would in addition command the coöperation of all similarly public-spirited persons and organizations in any plan of action which the congress might propose.

The natural plan for our purpose, the plan with the smallest artificial element under present circumstances, is the selection by the congress of departments of civic action in which it is desirable and practicable to enlist the general coöperation of the citizens. The organization of each part of this action should be entrusted to persons particularly interested in that kind of work, and particularly fitted for it. These persons would then have virtually the same relation to the congress which the different departments of any large corporation have to the directors. This is precisely what has been done in the formation of the Central Relief Association. That body is historically a subsection of the committee of forty on civic federation. The congress here contemplated would be the permanent form corresponding to that committee of forty. The Central Relief Association would remain one department or section of the operations of the congress. It would then be competent for the congress to consider the formation of one or twenty departments or sections entrusted with the organization of other municipal undertakings.

As has appeared from the foregoing account of the organization of the Federation and of its work, this rough sketch of the things in the minds of the active citizens of Chicago corresponded very closely with the details subsequently recommended and adopted. These details contained very little that was new, but they simply placed in order what was already in operation.

*The second cardinal fact about the Federation is that its organizers were wise enough to incorporate and express in its constitution the distinct policy of making both its aims and its membership as completely representative as possible of all the interests which the most liberal interpretation could call the concerns of good citizens. The organization was not a group of the elect trying to legislate for the non-*

elect, it was a company of representatives (somewhat arbitrarily selected, to be sure) standing for all the elements in the population that seemed to be honestly desirous of helping to work out civic salvation. This trait appeared first in the following clause of the preamble of the by-laws :

The objects of this Federation shall be . . . Second, To serve as a medium of acquaintance and sympathy between persons who reside in the different parts of the city, who pursue different vocations, who are by birth of different nationalities, who profess different creeds, or no creed, who for all these reasons are unknown to each other, but who, nevertheless, have similar interests in the well-being of Chicago, and who agree in the desire to promote every kind of municipal welfare.

This trait appeared second in the composition of the membership. Whatever various individuals may hold about the relative influence which different classes ought to have upon civic action, there is practically no difference of opinion in Chicago about the fundamental necessity of basing social prosperity of all sorts upon a secure foundation of business principles. Like all other enlightened people in the world, Chicago citizens are eager for comfort and culture, for the enjoyment of music and art, for the benefits of high standards of honor, for the security that comes from progress in genuine learning, morality and religion. But scholar, priest, preacher, philanthropist, politician and financier are frankly agreed in Chicago that however desirable the flowers and fruits of human development may be, there is no short-cut to the possession of them by the average man ; and the only way to make them more general is to reckon with the wisdom which experience has taught in the conduct of business, on which the possibility of all real progress depends. Accordingly it was perfectly in accord with the genius of the city, and at the same time with the dictates of right reason, that a large nucleus of successful organizers of business should be provided for in the new organization. It is needless to catalogue the other types of membership, but it should be noted that in all departments of effort which the Federation has undertaken, the active partnership of the commercial element with politics, law,

philanthropy, education and morals, has insured the plans adopted against the admixture of Utopianism which has so often proved fatal in similar enterprises. The organization is not only professionally, but geographically and socially municipal in the widest sense; and it seems thus as far as possible protected against the development of any sort of class spirit or provincialism.

*The third cardinal fact about the civic revival in Chicago was referred to in the introduction, viz., that the Civic Federation succeeded in coördinating and concentrating municipal patriotism because it distinctly appreciated the impossibility of cornering civic virtue in a single organization.* The people who formed the Federation were never visibly affected by any form of the hallucination that they had a monopoly of the good citizenship of the town. They took it for granted from the beginning that their body could at most be a sort of switch board, or clearing house, of civic patriotism. They understood perfectly that if the Federation should attempt to set itself up as the only exponent of good citizenship in Chicago it would speedily be without occupation. Attempts have been made by select companies of men in various cities to purify municipal politics by a personally conducted crusade. The result has been aggravation that hardly rose to the dignity of agitation, and no large fraction of municipal energy has been roused and enlisted. The Civic Federation, on the other hand, started with the perception that Chicago is a net work of organizations varying greatly in their specific purposes, but in scores of cases distinctly committed to some portions of the work which evidently makes up the total of successful municipal action. Some of these organizations plainly enjoyed advantages over the Federation for various kinds of influence; particularly the churches, the Woman's Club, and the other organizations already named. It would have been stupid generalship to attempt to usurp the influence in the town which these organizations exerted, and about the patriotic use of which they needed no instructions from the members of the Federation. It would have been difficult, if not impossible, for the Federation

to acquire the strength which these organizations had long possessed. Accordingly the Federation again exhibited its character as a natural evolution of local conditions by offering itself as an organ of coöperation between these well-known agencies. It did not try to be a substitute for these organizations. Their members were familiar to each other and to the citizens. Through their leadership many and vast enterprises had been successfully conducted. The Federation therefore inaugurated a series of civic movements on the presumption that the execution of them would involve harmonious action of the bodies of citizens to which we refer. The results of the coöperation which followed in pursuance of this programme have already been indicated.

*The fourth distinguishing feature of the movement was that it was comprehensive rather than fractional.* It did not confine itself to rectifying a single abnormal municipal condition, neglecting all the rest; on the contrary, it confronted municipal conditions as a whole, and attempted to exert an influence toward rescuing them from the demoralization that had resulted from popular neglect. It consequently avoided the mistake of dealing with a few specially interesting symptoms and thus making a false diagnosis of the total condition.

Here, again, there might have been failure if there had been any attempt to carry out ambitious theories of social philosophy. If, for example, the Federation had begun by drafting its proposed substitute for the city charter, or even the civil service bill, and had made its programme turn on attempts to get the city regulated according to logical deductions from either or both of those plans, it would have failed from inability to concentrate the sympathies and efforts of the citizens. Instead of staking its reputation and its usefulness upon ability to carry some particular measure, which it might have considered radically and logically antecedent to all minor reforms, the Federation undertook to organize practical measures for improving municipal conditions in every respect in which they were obviously neglected.

If an individual should venture to distribute his attention over such a wide territory, he would be likely to make an utter failure, unless he were in a position of authority like that of a mayor with ample powers and rare executive ability. More than that, an association constructed on the usual lines would doubtless have made a more complete failure than an individual. A club of the ordinary character, which should undertake to reform everything, would probably reform nothing, and would presently itself most of all need reform. The new civic movement in Chicago had as its rallying center not an omnibus committee, but a genuine federation; a committee of committees; an association of associations. From the representative citizens in the central council and the branch ward councils committees were formed of persons who undertook to promote particular improvements. These committees coöperated, as occasion suggested, with similar committees representing other bodies. Each member of the Federation, and of the coöperating associations, was presumed to be interested in a general way in the work of the rest, but in a particular way in the duty assigned to his committee. The central council of the Federation became sponsor for the work of all the committees, and through this bond of union all the citizens represented in the general association became in a sense responsible for the work of all the rest. In this way a collection of committees, each particularly interested in a special kind of municipal work, became a confederation, with purposes covering the whole range of municipal action. Each group composing the confederation had a moral guarantee of the support of the whole in carrying out measures which had once received the endorsement of the central body. Each person became a more effective supporter than he would otherwise have been of efforts parallel and allied with those to which he had given his direct assistance.

*The fifth distinguishing feature of the Federation's work was its investigation of facts.* In each division of its operations it abandoned theory and went out after pertinent informa-

tion. From the inspection of garbage boxes and of sewer pipes in basements of schoolhouses, to watching the polls and holding consultations with the parties opposed to each other during the strike, the policy of the Federation was that of getting its facts at first hand. In the nature of the case the facts so obtained were not as complete and not always as accurate as desirable; but the investigation carried on resulted in reports, several of which contain revelations of the most startling character about certain civic conditions in which all citizens have a share of interest. These reports in the aggregate constitute a body of information which should be published, and which the Federation doubtless will publish as both model and basis for further investigation. Among the most important of these documents we should mention:

1. The reports of the Sanitary Committee, with regard to fulfillment of contracts by the scavengers.
2. The reports of the sub-committee on the milk supply.
3. The report of the sub-committee on bakeries.
4. The report of the sub-committee on gas and electric lighting.
5. The report of the sub-committee on franchises and transportation, relating to duties of citizens with respect to care of sidewalks in front of their premises.
6. The report submitted by Dr. Bayard Holmes in behalf of the committee on public health.

Too much cannot be said in commendation of the character of the work of which these reports are specimens. It was throughout in striking contrast with the dilettantish attempts of many people to reform the world by irresponsible declamation.

*The sixth and last special feature to be mentioned as characteristic of this civic movement is the unusual degree to which the aggressive work of the Federation was assigned to people who might be called experts. The Federation did not assume that school-teachers are the best people to draft revenue laws, nor that ministers are likely to be competent inspectors of sani-*



tary conditions; nor that politicians will do the best service in regulating educational enterprises. To a remarkable extent the work of the Federation was conducted as a business man would manage his commercial enterprises, viz., by securing specialists for special work, and by depending upon them to know their business. The persons organized in connection with the Federation were not people who had previously failed to find any employment in which they could make a success for themselves, and who imagined that they could regulate other people's affairs better than they had their own. They were people on the contrary who had been in the habit of bringing things to pass, and consequently were wanted by their fellow citizens for their well-known ability. For instance, the ablest lawyers in the city were enlisted for different kinds of legal work; people who had been long familiar with various philanthropies were drafted for new service in charitable organizations; defects in the educational system were inspected and reported upon by persons of long experience and mature judgment; the committees on ways and means were men who had been among the commercial leaders of the city; and men who were well known as successful organizers of large numbers of employ  s were willing to accept the arduous duty of organizing vagrants for labor upon the streets, or of creating an independent force to supplement the work of street cleaning which the city appropriations were inadequate to perform. Thus the different branches of effort undertaken by the Federation were successful, because they were superintended by people fitted by talent and experience to carry on for themselves work requiring similar qualifications.

I will not add to this account of the Civic Federation in Chicago any conclusions of my own with reference to the policy proper for other cities. This paper is an attempt to give a faithful report and interpretation of some of the most important features connected with the first year's history of this Chicago institution. Possibly the record may seem to be of little consequence elsewhere. It represents, however, a most important advance along natural lines of progress in our city, and I believe it to contain

very obvious exemplifications of most radical societary laws. As to the immediate value of all this for Chicago, the judgment of every member of the Federation was doubtless expressed in the words of Mr. Gage: "These reports, one and all, utterly fail to show the great public benefit conferred by your association in ways that can find only indirect expression in the reports of practical doings. Your existence, your words and deeds, have reawakened the slumbering civic life. You have created a civic center where the sympathy and desire of those who love the city we live in may be safely focalized. You have given hope and confidence to thousands who have become pessimists on American municipal institutions. You have made it possible, as demonstrated in the late vote on Civil Service Reform, to rally in a great cause the best sentiments of our people. These and others that might be named, constitute the moral victories which cannot be made to appear in tabulated form."

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